

Message

**From:** Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality [rwilbur@mdeq.ms.gov]  
**Sent:** 6/26/2018 1:23:29 PM  
**To:** Marraccini, Davina [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=66fecfe52dc84d8db7ab0859adee8426-Marraccini, Davina]  
**Subject:** News Clippings June 26, 2018 -- Full Stories

**State**

**Report endorses controversial project to dam Pearl River, create lake near Jackson, Miss.**  
The Advocate

Widening the Pearl River near Jackson, Mississippi, is the best way to prevent flooding in the area, a Mississippi levee district concluded in a long-awaited draft environmental impact statement released last week.

But the controversial project has drawn heated opposition from southeast Louisiana and the Mississippi Gulf Coast, where government officials, environmentalists and fishing interests fear that the project — which would create a reservoir or "lake" several miles long — will cause a decrease in water flow to the lower Pearl River basin.

Some opponents contend the project is being driven by development interests in Mississippi that see the potential for waterfront property along the new lake.

The project was authorized by Congress in 2007 but has not been funded. The estimated cost is \$350 million, with a three-year construction timeline.

The more than 300-page draft document doesn't say much about the project's impact on the lower Pearl River system. But the Rankin-Hinds Pearl River Flood & Drainage Control District, the project's local sponsor, says on its website that the issue has been studied "extensively" and that there will be no discernible variance in the amount of water flowing into the new lake from the existing Ross Barnett Reservoir and the amount flowing out of the lake to the downstream river.

Flow requirements set for the Ross Barnett Reservoir will apply to this project, the site says, and emergency gates have been added to the design of a proposed underwater dam that can be opened to allow the minimum flow to continue during extreme drought conditions.

About two-thirds of the Pearl River watershed relies on runoff from south of the project location, the site says, "so the Jackson area is not the only driver of water levels in the southern parts of the watershed."

But St. Tammany Parish officials, who have opposed the project for years, worry that changes in the Pearl's flow during critical times of the year could alter the fragile wetland ecology in places like the Honey Island Swamp.

Andrew Whitehurst, of the Gulf Restoration Network, said the project's sponsors chose to look at evaporation rates from the lake on an annual basis, losing what he called the nuance of looking at the low-flow months of June through September.

"We've said we know it's not a problem year-round, but they didn't pull those months out and treat them differently," he said, despite requests by environmental groups that they do so. Changes in salinity also require a more nuanced examination, he said. "Every month of the year matters," he said.

Whitehurst called the project an experiment. And while the levee district says there won't be a significant loss of water that will hurt the river south of Jackson, "we don't have the modeling to back that up," he said.

The Rankin-Hinds flood control district has been pushing for the project for years. According to the environmental impact statement, the district initially considered 16 alternatives for

reducing the flooding threat around Jackson posed by the Pearl. It narrowed the list to four: doing nothing, relocating structures from flood-prone areas, building additional levees and widening the Pearl's channel — the "lake" alternative.

The project will entail moving an existing underwater dam 4 miles to the south and excavating 25 million cubic yards of material from the river's channel. The levee district calls it the most technically feasible, environmentally sound and cost-effective alternative.

At \$350 million, it's by far the least expensive of the alternatives, except for doing nothing. Relocating threatened structures — including homes, businesses, government buildings, hospitals and schools — would be the costliest option, topping \$2 billion, an amount the district called cost-prohibitive, according to the draft statement.

Adding levees would cost an estimated \$730 million, but the risk of overtopping and levee failure would remain.

Flood control in the Jackson area has been studied for decades, with levees constructed in the 1960s. But much of the area remains unprotected, and the study cites the record flood on Easter Sunday of 1979, which placed most of Jackson underwater and would cause more than \$1 billion in damage if it happened today. Another significant flood happened in May 1983.

Environmental issues addressed in the study include the potential impact on two endangered species — the gulf sturgeon and the ringed sawback turtle.

However, environmental groups are criticizing the draft statement for failing to include a biological assessment, as required by the National Environmental Policy Act. The document says that assessment is "to be added."

Jill Mastrototaro, of Audubon Mississippi, said the omission means her group, other stakeholders, natural resources agencies and the public are unable to do a science-based review of the project's impact, including on the hydrology downstream.

"Such huge deficiencies send a signal that the proponents are not taking this environmental review process very seriously," she said.

Groups like the Gulf Restoration Network are pushing to extend the public comment period on the draft document from 45 days to 60, Whitehurst said, and they don't want the clock to begin until the biological assessment is added.

The current deadline for public comment is Aug. 3.

The Rankin-Hinds district has said it will hold a public meeting in the downstream area, but the only meeting now scheduled is in Jackson on July 24.

State Sen. Sharon Hewitt, R-Slidell, has invited the district to hold a meeting in St. Tammany Parish.

Whitehurst said he expects a "tussle" over the time limit. But there's also going to be a larger fight over the science.

"It's going to be a battle of experts," he said.

[http://www.theadvocate.com/new\\_orleans/news/environment/article\\_fffae350-758f-11e8-970a-a7f2e4ce4cb6.html](http://www.theadvocate.com/new_orleans/news/environment/article_fffae350-758f-11e8-970a-a7f2e4ce4cb6.html)

## **State Government**

### **Mississippi auditor to resign, run state veterans agency**

AP

Mississippi state Auditor Stacey Pickering is resigning his statewide elected post to become head of the state's Veterans Affairs Board.

Pickering, 49, says he accepted the new post Monday and will make the transition around July 15.

The Laurel Republican replaces former director Randy Reeves, who was appointed by President Donald Trump as undersecretary for memorial affairs in the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs in 2017.

Gov. Phil Bryant will appoint a replacement who will hold the post until after state elections in 2019. Spokesman Knox Graham said Bryant "is grateful for Mr. Pickering's exceptional

service to Mississippi as state auditor and knows that will continue at the Mississippi Veterans Affairs Board."

A major in the 186th Air Operations Group of the Air National Guard, Pickering has repeatedly been deployed in his role as a chaplain. Pickering says he was approached about the veterans' post about six weeks ago. Pickering says the new job helps align his National Guard role and his regular job.

"This opportunity really marries well — taking care of our veterans — with what I do in the guard, taking care of our airmen," Pickering told The Associated Press.

The outgoing auditor said he had informed Bryant and expects the governor to be ready to name a permanent replacement about the time he departs. It will be the third statewide elected post that Bryant will get to appoint this year. He named then-Agriculture Commissioner Cindy Hyde-Smith to replace Thad Cochran in the U.S. Senate, and then named state Rep. Andy Gipson to replace Hyde-Smith.

Elected state auditor in 2007, this was Pickering's third term in the post. Before that, he served a term in the state Senate. When asked if this was a permanent exit from electoral politics, Pickering said "You never know." He said he was proud of the \$28 million the auditor's office had recovered under his leadership, as well as the 120 people convicted of crimes. Pickering said he also felt he had been effective in influencing policy on education, Medicaid and government transparency issues.

Pickering just completed a term as the head of the National State Auditors Association, hosting the group's convention in Biloxi earlier this month. He's a member of a prominent Jones County political family. Cousin Chip Pickering served in Congress while uncle Charles Pickering ran for attorney general and the U.S. Senate and served as a federal judge.

Pickering's office frequently worked with federal officials on corruption investigations, including an inquiry that revealed former Corrections Commissioner Christopher Epps accepted more than \$1.4 million in bribes from private contractors before pleading guilty in 2015. Pickering, though, faced questions about whether he was spending campaign money on private expenses. Lawmakers later restricted such spending.

<http://www.sunherald.com/news/state/mississippi/article213795434.html>

### **Northrop Grumman expansion means more jobs**

WLOX

MOSS POINT, MS (WLOX) -When it comes to high tech aviation, Northrop Grumman is at the top. Right now, the company is expanding its role in Moss Point.

"This is the most advanced manufacturing in the world," said Governor Phil Bryant who was on hand to help cut the ribbon on the facility's new operational area. The work being done helps the F-35, a new high tech jet, take flight for the Department of Defense.

"Adding the F-35 Lightning II to the inventory is a remarkable opportunity for us here in Mississippi and for the workforce of the future," said Bryant.

Up until now, the Northrop Grumman's Moss Point site was dedicated to manufacturing autonomous aircraft. This expansion will bring the manned aircraft industry to the facility, and more jobs along with it.

According to Jackson County Supervisor Randy Bosarge, this is just the beginning. "There's more industry in Jackson County than there is in any other county in Mississippi. We take pride in that, we don't take it for granted. We want to grow on top of that," said Bosarge.

The governor hopes that could even mean more industries moving from other states.

"Manufacturing opportunities for us are great in being able to move companies out of California and here to Mississippi," he said.

In the meantime, this growth means stability, according to Louis Pedroza, the Northrop Grumman site director here in Moss Point. "It's the morale of the employee that can actually go home and say you know what, I have a job for many years. We're all looking to support our family, and when you can come to work and know that you have longevity, I think it's a good day," said Pedroza.

Officials say this expansion has grown the workforce and production at the Moss Point facility by 40 percent.

## ***Oil Spill***

### **Mississippi Aquarium construction making progress**

WLOX

On Monday, Members of the Mississippi Aquarium management and construction team gave a tour of the work site.

CEO and President of the Mississippi Aquarium David Kimmel glowed with excitement as he showed public officials the progress being made on the Mississippi Aquarium.

"When you drive by you don't really understand the size of this until you walk it and look at the drone footage, you start to see just how large this site is," Kimmel said.

Mayor Billy Hewes joined the tour. "It's amazing the progress their making. It's gone from a blighted landscape to a little bit of dirt work and some fencing, to now we're actually starting to see the physical structure come out of the ground and you can almost see some of the components independently show," said Hewes.

The biggest component you can see will turn into a focal point of the aquarium. A large concrete structure in the middle of the site is a base for the tank. In the center of the tank, a circle tube is carved out where visitors will walk through and be surrounded by aquatic wonders.

Across the property a large hole will soon turn into a dolphin habitat. Underneath the ground, much of the piping is finished.

According to Kimmel right now the \$63 million project is on schedule and on budget.

"Everything that we've had has been covered and even those things that are unforeseen we've had a contingency budget set up to deal with those," Kimmel said.

Much progress has been made in the 13 months since ground was broken on the aquarium, now the anticipation is growing to see what lies ahead.

"It won't be long before we'll have the acrylic coming over from Italy. It's already manufactured and will be coming into the state port," Hewes said. "This building should be ready for it before too long."

Project leaders said the Aquarium is still on track to open in late 2019 or early 2020.

<http://www.wlox.com/story/38506445/mississippi-aquarium-construction-making-progress>

### **Local coastal work receives more oil spill money**

Daily Comet

A project to rebuild eroding marshes in southern Terrebonne Parish has received another \$1.7 million engineering and design.

The money, from a settlement with BP over the 2010 oil spill, will go toward a portion of the Terrebonne Basin Ridge and Marsh Creation Project. The project's **Bayou Terrebonne Increment**, as it's labeled, will build 126 acres of earthen ridge and 1,370 acres of marsh north of Terrebonne Bay.

State and federal trustees overseeing how the BP money is spent had already allocated \$3 million for the design and engineering.

"Additional funding for the Bayou Terrebonne project includes funding to investigate land rights issues associated with a greater number of property owners than was originally anticipated," the Deepwater Horizon Natural Resource Damage Assessment Trustees said last week.

The engineering and design will cost \$5.3 million, and the Bayou Terrebonne project's total cost is \$123 million.

Part of the state's coastal master plan, the larger Terrebonne Basin Ridge and Marsh Creation Project includes several other phases that aim to restore more than 5,000 acres of eroded marshes and ridges to protect inland communities from Gulf storm surges and tidal flooding:

- A section near Dularge will bolster 1,850 acres and cost a total of \$171 million.
- A section near Pointe-aux-Chenes will benefit 1,600 acres for \$138 million.
- A portion near Fourchon in southern Lafourche Parish will benefit an area of 1,680 acres and cost \$123 million.

Planning began in summer 2016. Once the engineering and design are complete, the trustees will consider approving them for construction.

<http://www.dailycomet.com/news/20180625/local-coastal-work-receives-more-oil-spill-money>

### *Regional*

#### **Groundwater commission hires Water Institute to brainstorm aquifer protection, mulls fee increases**

The Advocate

The regional groundwater commission is thinking about increasing the fee charged to pump water out of the aquifer beneath Baton Rouge to pay for a new study intended to provide a long-term plan for protecting the water supply.

The Capital Area Groundwater Commission agreed at its latest meeting to hire researchers with the Water Institute of the Gulf to study the Southern Hills Aquifer, which supplies water for drinking and industrial use.

The first phase of the study is expected to last 14 months and cost \$237,000. A second phase would cost about the same or a bit less, commission executive director Tony Duplechin said. After that, the commission would have to decide what steps to take to preserve the groundwater supply.

An underground fault runs roughly along Interstate 10 beneath Baton Rouge. To the south, the groundwater is salty, and saltwater has gradually crept across the fault line as freshwater is pumped out of the northern side.

The Baton Rouge Water Co. has installed a scavenger well to suck saltwater away from one of its freshwater wells, but the government itself has never really come up with a long-term plan to address the problem, said commissioner Matt Reonas, of the state Office of Conservation.

Commissioner William Daniel, who represents East Baton Rouge Parish, agreed. He and Reonas said the commission has done some modeling of saltwater intrusion and identified potential problems but hasn't come up with solutions.

The commission's members asked Water Institute staff what kinds of options might be on the table but were told data will have to be collected first — not just about the aquifer, but about how the population and water consumption has changed over the years.

Some ideas floated in the past include more scavenger wells, injecting saltwater deep underground, further limiting industrial pumping and restricting the sale of water out of the district.

"I just think it's time to move forward with a long-term plan," said commission Chairman Barry Huggins, who represents West Baton Rouge Parish.

The first steps will include gathering all the data and modeling done so far and laying out exactly what the commission hopes to accomplish, said Alyssa Dausman, the Water Institute's vice president for science.

"This is a deep problem. It's going to require deep engagement," Reonas said. The commission and its partners need to consider the aquifer not only as an environmental issue, Reonas said, but how the decisions will affect the economy and public health. Commissioner Todd Talbot, who represents ExxonMobil, said it is important for everyone to agree on what they want to accomplish from the get-go. Down the road in Phase 2, the Water Institute will fill in gaps in the data, including places where scientific advancement will allow for better information. Then they'll recommend various alternatives available to the commission, which will have to decide how to proceed. Dausman said the Water Institute has staff that can help the commission hunt for financing and reputable contractors. To pay for the research and improvements, Huggins suggested raising the pumping fees paid by industrial facilities and utility companies. They pay a fee of \$10 for every million gallons pumped. Private and shallow wells are exempt, as are users who pump water solely for agriculture. Huggins suggested raising the fee to \$15 per million gallons for three years, which would bring in an additional \$280,000. Ultimately, the commission decided to contract with the Water Institute but tabled the fee increase. The board can pay for the first phase of the study with existing funds, and Baton Rouge Water Co. representative Dennis McGehee suggested looking at the commission's finances more closely to determine how much of a fee increase is necessary. Huggins said the pumping fee isn't a major expense for individual households because it's so dispersed. What's more important is raising the funds to make sure the aquifer remains healthy in the years and decades to come. The \$10 fee on a million gallons trickles down to about 8 to 10 cents per household — a trivial amount, he said. "But if you turn your tap on and there's no water, it's not so trivial anymore," he said. [http://www.theadvocate.com/baton\\_rouge/news/environment/article\\_bb75a8b6-7588-11e8-8aeb-5711a2948e3e.html](http://www.theadvocate.com/baton_rouge/news/environment/article_bb75a8b6-7588-11e8-8aeb-5711a2948e3e.html)

#### **Jury selection ends first day in Drummond, Balch & Bingham bribery trial** Al.com

Jury selection will continue Tuesday in the bribery trial of a Drummond Company executive and two Balch & Bingham lawyers. Balch & Bingham attorneys Joel Iverson Gilbert and Steven George McKinney, and Drummond vice president David Lynn Roberson, face six federal charges alleging they bribed former Alabama state Rep. Oliver Robinson to oppose the expansion of an environmental clean-up site in north Birmingham. Robinson was previously charged in the scheme, and pleaded guilty to charges related to bribery. Roberson, Gilbert, and McKinney pleaded not guilty in October, and were released on \$5,000 unsecured bonds. The three will face trial together, and jury selection began Monday morning. Three jury selection experts were retained—one by the Balch team, one by Roberson, and one by the prosecution. Opening statements and testimony will begin after jury selection in the Hugo Black Federal Courthouse. U.S. District Judge Abdul Kallon is presiding over the case, but the trial is being held in the chief judge's larger courtroom because of the amount of people expected to attend. A six-count indictment, issued Sept. 28, charges the three men each with one count of conspiracy, one of bribery, three counts of honest services wire fraud, and one count of money laundering. According to the indictments and U.S. Attorney Jay Town, here's what the conspiracy consisted of: McKinney was chair of Balch & Bingham's Environmental and Natural Resources Section and Gilbert worked in that department. Drummond hired Balch & Bingham to respond to actions by the United States Environmental Protection Agency to expand a Superfund cleanup site in north Birmingham, and add it to a national priorities list. In that area, which includes the Tarrant and Inglenook neighborhood, a soil sampling detected elevated levels of arsenic, lead,

and benzo(a). The cleanup would have exposed Drummond to "tens of millions of dollars" in costs.

Over two years, Robinson's foundation received from the law firm approximately \$360,000 to communicate Balch & Bingham's and Drummond's opposition to the EPA's actions to the residents of north Birmingham, as directed by Gilbert and Roberson. Robinson also submitted letters written by the lawyers to multiple agencies on his official state stationary.

"The indictment alleges generally a scheme to bribe a public official, Alabama House member Oliver Robinson, to use his influence to oppose the designation of certain neighborhoods in his House district as part of a Superfund clean-up site on the National Priorities List," according to an order by Magistrate Judge Michael Putnam. "The evidence relevant to this allegation involves emails, correspondence, and financial records over a two-year period of time that are complex and voluminous."

Robinson is expected to testify during the trial, which could last several weeks.

[https://www.al.com/news/birmingham/index.ssf/2018/06/opening\\_statements\\_testimony\\_t.html](https://www.al.com/news/birmingham/index.ssf/2018/06/opening_statements_testimony_t.html)

## **National**

### **EPA moving forward with review of standard for ozone**

AP

The Environmental Protection Agency will move forward Tuesday with a review of its limit on ground-level ozone, asking the public for input on whether the current standard protects public health — and if it hurts the economy.

The Obama administration tightened the ozone standard in 2015, citing health concerns.

Industry has said the new limit is too strict.

The EPA routinely re-evaluates its standards on a five-year schedule, though it often misses its deadlines. Administrator Scott Pruitt said the ozone review will be conducted by October 2020 even though it's just getting underway. The public now has 60 days to comment on the standard.

Pruitt told the outside advisory panel that makes recommendations to consider "economic or energy effects" as well as health.

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce filed a lawsuit challenging the 2015 standard, saying the "EPA set an unattainable mandate ... that will slow economic growth opportunities," noting that many areas of the country still don't meet the more lenient 2008 standard.

States had to begin meeting the new standard last October. Pruitt originally said he would delay implementation by one year but backtracked after being sued by 15 states.

Ground-level ozone, the main ingredient in smog, is an unstable gas created when pollution from cars, power plants, oil refineries, chemical plants and other sources react in the atmosphere to sunlight. It can cause serious breathing problems for some people, and contributes to thousands of premature deaths each year.

<https://chicago.suntimes.com/environment/epa-moving-forward-with-review-of-standard-for-ozone/>

### **Judge Dismisses Climate Suits Targeting Big Oil Companies**

**San Francisco and Oakland sought to compel Exxon, BP, Chevron and others to pay for climate change-related expenses**

WSJ

A federal judge on Monday dismissed lawsuits by the cities of San Francisco and Oakland alleging that five of the world's largest oil companies should pay to protect the cities' residents from the impacts of climate change.

U.S. District Judge William Alsup granted a motion by the companies— BP PLC, Royal Dutch Shell PLC, Exxon Mobil Corp., ConocoPhillips and Chevron Corp. —to dismiss the suits, ruling that while global warming was a real threat, it must be fixed "by our political branches."

"The dangers raised in the complaints are very real," he wrote. "But those dangers are worldwide. Their causes are worldwide. The benefits of fossil fuels are worldwide. The problem deserves a solution on a more vast scale than can be supplied by a district judge or jury in a public nuisance case."

The ruling is a blow to an emerging legal campaign by cities and municipalities that are trying to argue that oil and gas companies created a public nuisance by producing fossil fuels they knew would result in harmful emissions. **New York City** and several other local governments in California, Washington and Colorado have also sued on similar grounds.

"Reliable, affordable energy is not a public nuisance but a public necessity," said R. Hewitt Pate, Chevron's general counsel. "Using lawsuits to vilify the men and women who provide the energy we all need is neither honest nor constructive."

Spokesmen for Shell and ConocoPhillips said the companies were pleased with the ruling. Representatives for Exxon and BP didn't immediately respond to requests for comment.

Oakland City Attorney Barbara Parker said the city was "disappointed" by the ruling and is weighing an appeal. "These defendants must be held accountable for misleading the American people" about climate change, said Ms. Parker.

A spokesman for San Francisco, John Coté, said the city would decide on its "next steps" shortly.

"We're pleased that the court recognized that the science of global warming is no longer in dispute," he said. "Our litigation forced a public court proceeding on climate science, and now these companies can no longer deny it is real and valid."

The suits by San Francisco and Oakland sought to force the companies to pay for infrastructure, such as sea walls, that they expect to need due to rising sea levels and other changes linked to a changing climate. The cities didn't specify how much they were seeking but said the costs could run into the billions of dollars.

Defendants in the Oakland and San Francisco cases argued that Congress has given the Environmental Protection Agency the authority to regulate pollution effects under the Clean Air Act, and that the cases impinged on the agency's powers.

Judge Alsup said the court "fully accepts the vast scientific consensus" that the burning of fossil fuels is leading global temperatures to increase and to "accelerated sea level rise."

Yet he highlighted previous legal rulings which found the Clean Air Act, which grants the Environmental Protection Agency the authority to set emissions standards, displaces federal common law suits related to greenhouse gas emissions.

"Courts must also respect and defer to the other co-equal branches of government when the problem at hand clearly deserves a solution best addressed by those branches," he wrote.

Jay Timmons, president and CEO of the National Association of Manufacturers, which has supported the companies in the cases, praised the judge's decision.

"Other municipalities around the country who have filed similar lawsuits should take note as those complaints are likely to end the same way," he said.

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/judge-dismisses-climate-suits-targeting-big-oil-companies-1529979870>

## **GOP chairman takes aim at environmental review law**

The Hill

Rep. **Rob Bishop** (R-Utah) on Monday said Congress ought to make changes to a core environmental law to make it less of a weapon against projects.

Bishop, the chairman of the House Natural Resources Committee, said on Hill.TV's "Rising" that the National Environmental Policy Act's (NEPA) permitting process is the main roadblock standing in the way of projects like oil and natural gas drilling on federal land and building more infrastructure.

"The country passed NEPA ... decades ago, in order to ensure that people have the right to have their voices heard. It is now being misused to ensure people have the right to sue continuously to slow projects down," Bishop told "Rising" host Buck Sexton.

"So projects that can be leased, did all the requirements they need to do, can wait up to 10 years before they can actually get a permit to start being in production. And that does no good for the industry, and it doesn't do any good for Americans."

Bishop and his committee have repeatedly acted to try to streamline the environmental review process, with promises that it would not hurt environmental protections.

Environmentalists and Democrats say the GOP is trying to dismantle important environmental protections and opportunities for public input before projects are undertaken.

"Republicans have a personal vendetta against NEPA or any bedrock environmental law that favors the American people over money-hungry, big corporate developers," Rep. Raul Grijalva (Ariz.), the Natural Resources Committee's top Democrat, said in April when the panel held a hearing on "weaponization" of NEPA.

Bishop said letting states take over permitting for some federal land actions would greatly improve the situation.

"The federal government can establish the standards for development, let the states do the permitting process," Bishop said Monday. "They can do in a matter of months what it takes us, federal government, years to actually accomplish. And states are not going to be litigated against as much as the federal government will."

<http://thehill.com/hilltv/rising/393924-bishop-takes-aim-at-environmental-review-law>

### **EPA hosts summit in Exeter on PFAS chemicals**

Summit is first of several scheduled over next year  
WMUR

EXETER, N.H. —Top U.S. Environmental Protection Agency officials visited New Hampshire Monday to host the first-ever summit on PFAS chemicals.

Officials heard from families about how PFAS, or Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances, have affected them, as well as the changes they want to see.

Monday's event was the first of several EPA summits that will happen over the next year.

"This is really a historic event for EPA in making sure that we're building on these going across the country," said Peter Grevatt, of the EPA Office of Groundwater and Drinking Water. The summit came after a federal report revealed last week that PFAS chemicals are more toxic than previously thought. People came from all over the Northeast to share their concerns.

"Clean, safe water is critical to this region's citizens, to our businesses, to our economy and to our quality of life," said Barbara Reid, of the New Hampshire Municipal Association.

PFAS come from chemicals used most commonly in nonstick coatings, firefighting foams and water repellents.

The study shows the EPA advisory level of 70 parts per trillion for exposure to PFOAs and PFOS is actually seven to 10 times higher than where it should be.

It also says ingesting the chemicals could lead to several health issues, including cancer risk and affecting children's growth.

With many New Hampshire communities on the Seacoast and in the Merrimack Valley affected by PFAS chemicals, officials wanted to start these summits in the Granite State.

"The report issued last week is in draft (form) and EPA will be looking at it and certainly we want as much information out there as possible for the public on these contaminants and we look forward to working with our colleagues in different federal agencies as they finish their report," said Alexandra Dunn, regional administrator, EPA New England.

EPA officials said the agency is researching PFAS chemicals and considering whether to designate the contaminants as hazardous, as well as coming up with recommendations for cleanup.

"I live with guilt every single day that I made a decision, unknowingly, that contaminated my children and I had no idea and now I have to worry for the rest of my life," said Andrea Amico, co-founder of Testing for Pease.

"I'm here to say we need you to do your job EPA, DES, DHHS. It's time to stop protecting polluters and start protecting people," said Nancy Murphy of Merrimack.

The summit resumes Tuesday with a full day of workshops featuring environmental leaders from every New England state.

<http://www.wmur.com/article/epa-hosting-summit-in-exeter-on-pfas-chemicals/21938607>

### **A new supervolcano is brewing under Massachusetts, Vermont and New Hampshire** Fox News

Something unexpected has been gradually making itself known to geologists in the United States. A huge mass of molten rock is creeping upwards beneath the nation's north eastern states.

"The upwelling we detected is like a hot-air balloon, and we infer that something is rising up through the deeper part of our planet under New England," says Rutgers University geophysicist Professor Vadim Levin.

Traces of the brooding mass only became evident through a large-scale new seismic study. The idea that there may be a super volcano brewing under Massachusetts, Vermont and New Hampshire is something of a surprise.

"Our study challenges the established notion of how the continents on which we live behave," Professor Levin says. "It challenges the textbook concepts taught in introductory geology classes."

The region is geologically stable. There are no active volcanoes.

So the massive magma build-up must be a relatively recent event.

But, in the timescale of Earth's geological processes, this still means tens of millions of years.

"It will likely take millions of years for the upwelling to get where it's going," Professor Levin explains. "The next step is to try to understand how exactly it's happening."

Something strange had been noted about the region earlier. Somewhere down there was an anomaly hundreds of degrees Celsius hotter than its surroundings.

The new study has helped identify the molten blob as being centred under Vermont, with parts of western New Hampshire and western Massachusetts also within its embrace.

"It is not Yellowstone-like, but it's a distant relative," Professor Levin says.

As to whether-or-not the magma bubble will eventually eek its way to the surface is unknown.

"Maybe it didn't have time yet, or maybe it is too small and will never make it," Professor Levin told National Geographic.

"Come back in 50 million years, and we'll see what happens."

<http://www.foxnews.com/science/2018/06/25/new-supervolcano-is-brewing-under-massachusetts-vermont-and-new-hampshire.html>

### **Press Releases**

#### **EPA Hosts First Ever PFAS Community Engagement Event in New Hampshire, Hears from Communities Across New England**

06/25/2018

Exeter, N.H. – On Monday night, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) hosted the first day of a two-day per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) Community Engagement event in Exeter, N.H. with more than 200 participants. Following the historic National Leadership Summit on PFAS in Washington, D.C. last month, today's session – the first of its kind – gave EPA the opportunity to hear directly from New England communities on how to best help address this important issue.

"It is critical EPA hears directly from the public as we work to manage the issue of PFAS in communities," said EPA New England Regional Administrator Alexandra Dunn. "Participants provided an important perspective on how these chemicals are impacting communities, opening a productive conversation with the agency. This feedback will help us develop a management plan."

Most importantly, EPA heard directly from the public at the listening session. Dozens of participants, including six community groups from New England spoke about their

experiences, concerns, and suggestions on PFAS. Using information from the National Leadership Summit, public docket, and community engagement events, EPA plans to develop a PFAS Management Plan for release later this year.

Tomorrow's session will feature a variety of perspectives on efforts to address PFAS from officials working at the federal, state and local levels. Day two of the event will run from 8:00 am until 3:00 pm. The event is open to the public and the press.

At the PFAS National Leadership Summit in Washington, D.C. on May 22-23, Administrator Pruitt announced four actions EPA will take:

- EPA will initiate steps to evaluate the need for a maximum contaminant level (MCL) for PFOA and PFOS. We will convene our federal partners and examine everything we know about PFOA and PFOS in drinking water.
- EPA is beginning the necessary steps to propose designating PFOA and PFOS as "hazardous substances" through one of the available statutory mechanisms, including potentially CERCLA Section 102.
- EPA is currently developing groundwater cleanup recommendations for PFOA and PFOS at contaminated sites and will complete this task by fall of this year.
- EPA is taking action in close collaboration with our federal and state partners to develop toxicity values for GenX and PFBS by this summer.

#### Background

PFAS is a group of man-made chemicals that have been widely used in everyday products since the 1940s. But PFAS compounds also can enter the environment, raising concerns about the potential environmental and health risks. PFAS have been detected in groundwater in some New England communities.

Citizens are also encouraged to submit written statements to the public docket at <https://www.regulations.gov/> enter docket number: OW-2018-0270. A summary of the New England community engagement event will be made available on the PFAS Community Engagement website following the event.

New Hampshire marks the first community engagement. Throughout the summer, EPA will visit and similarly engage with additional communities across the country. Information on these upcoming sessions will also be available on the EPA [website](#).

Additional information can be found at: <https://www.epa.gov/pfas/pfas-community-engagement>

<https://www.epa.gov/newsreleases/epa-hosts-first-ever-pfas-community-engagement-event-new-hampshire-hears-communities>

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Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality | 515 East Amite Street, Jackson, MS 39201

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